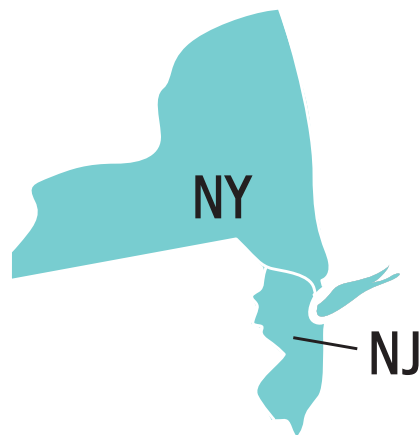


Region 2 Environmental Finance Center

AT THE MAXWELL SCHOOL AT SYRACUSE
UNIVERSITY



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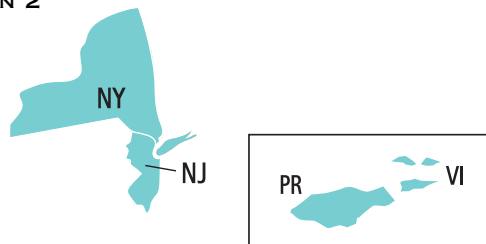
BACKGROUND & SUMMARY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Region 2 Environmental Finance Center (EFC) at Syracuse University's Maxwell School was established in 1993 and serves New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Since that time, and throughout 2005, the Syracuse EFC continued its mission to enhance the administrative and financial capacities of state and local government agencies and the nonprofit and private sectors as they endeavor to improve environmental quality and maintain environmental infrastructure.

Throughout 2005, the Syracuse EFC continued to establish working collaborations with government officials and nonprofit and private sector programs that provide technical assistance. One result of these efforts has been the continued development of the Public Management and Finance Program (PMFP). Within the framework of the PMFP, the EFC provides public outreach and training and facilitates partnerships. In fact, one of the hallmarks of the EFC's work under the PMFP is its collaboration with its partners to provide customized outreach and training for individual communities, providing tailored approaches rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. In this way, the EFC has been successful in helping individual communities understand specific issues of concern.

The intent of the PMFP is to introduce local officials and public managers, as well as other community leaders, to the fundamental concepts and practices of local government finance and strategic planning; holistic approaches to environmental stewardship, infrastructure improvements, and planning; and other forms of technical assistance. It can also be described as a "technical assistance cooperative" that forges teams among various technical assistance providers to assist communities. Areas of application include source water protection, solid waste, water and wastewater problem-solving, asset management, and other environmental improvements.

REGION 2



In 2005, the EFC also started developing a program on sustainability as well. The intent of the program is to offer process facilitation, public outreach, training, education programs, and direct and indirect technical assistance to support sustainability initiatives. Climate change and renewable energy, green buildings, and resource use and waste reduction are some of the issues targeted under sustainability. To this end, the EFC has engaged in intensive collaboration with a number of national and local agencies and organizations and has already begun more than a dozen new initiatives in New York and nationally.

Another major area of involvement has been development of a substantial partnership with the Syracuse Center of Excellence in Environmental and Energy Systems (CoE), created by the state of New York and funded by the state, EPA, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), and private sector sponsors. The intention of the CoE program is to foster innovations to improve health, productivity, security, and sustainability in various environments. Activities include product development and educational programs affecting built environments and the urban and rural setting. The EFC is engaged in several new initiatives with CoE, two of which involve the U.S. Green Building Council.

Other services provided by the EFC in 2005 include assistance with rate-setting and analysis, facilitation of processes to guide environmental improvements, training events focused on environmental issues, and analyses of funding options.

The Syracuse EFC's goal for the future is to have three major functional areas: 1) the PMFP, 2) a sustainability program, and 3) the partnership with CoE.

ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Completed Projects & Initiatives

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE PROGRAM (PMFP)

Since the Region 2 EFC was established at the Maxwell School, it has become a resource for municipal professionals and other community representatives through a variety of presentations, workshops, and interactive forums. The PMFP has served as a means for municipal professionals and leaders from EPA Region 2 communities to learn, explore, and discuss public finance and other issues relative to environmental improvements.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) continued its support for the water- and wastewater-related activities of the PMFP, awarding \$205,300 to the Region 2 EFC for 2004 and 2005 program activities. The bulk of activities performed under the USDA grant involved specific municipal water or wastewater projects in which there was a need to facilitate the processes involved in the planning, financing, and implementation phases. These processes involved community-specific public outreach and education strategies related to the costs associated with water or wastewater projects, a critical link needed to generate public awareness and support and to reduce project costs.

There is little change in the primary functions of the PMFP to facilitate partnerships among the technical assistance community, provide public outreach and education to facilitate environmental improvements, and training local government officials and technical assistance providers. These three functions, or components, of the PMFP can be critical links to the ability of a community to successfully develop a project. The subsections that follow identify those links.

The focus of PMFP activities has historically been in New York State, but because the PMFP program can be replicated elsewhere, EFCs located in Kentucky,

Maine, North Carolina, California, and New Mexico collaborated in late 2004 to submit proposals to build upon the PMFP concept in their respective states. In addition, the Region 2 EFC started to promote the PMFP in New Jersey in 2005.

Technical Assistance Partnerships

The EFC sponsors quarterly Technical Assistance Partnership Forums for the purpose of promoting and sustaining collegial relationships among technical assistance providers (TAPs). In 2005, each forum was attended by an average of 20 TAPs representing non-profit, public, private, and academic organizations

In 2005, the Syracuse EFC...

- ◆ Invited more than 1,000 local government officials and TAPs to its specialized training events.
- ◆ Reached 1,750 people through its newsletter.
- ◆ Facilitated information exchange among 346 active members of its listserv.
- ◆ Gave 17 presentations at state, university, nonprofit, and national, and international events.
- ◆ Hosted more than 10 conferences.
- ◆ Attended more than 13 conferences.
- ◆ Facilitated process discussions at approximately 50 meetings with local, state, and federal agencies and nonprofit groups.
- ◆ Developed new collaborations through more than 25 meetings with city, state, national, university, and tribal agencies as well as companies and nonprofit groups.
- ◆ Attracted 22 to 150 people to each of its training events.

ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

that serve New York as well as other states. The forums have created an environment in which an exchange of information reduces duplication of efforts, thereby maximizing technical assistance resources available to other communities. These forums also promote efforts that complement one another, enhancing the ability of the communities the TAPs serve to access new or additional resources. Meeting on a regular basis allows TAPs to 1) share information about projects without interruptions; 2) discuss solutions to particular situations and brainstorm relevant ideas; 3) learn about new statutes, procedures, or guidelines in their fields; and 4) receive new or advanced training.

Communicating with one another about project planning and implementation and sharing challenges and successes is a benefit to all communities, and these forums provide ample opportunity for TAPs to connect with one another and facilitate communication about community infrastructure projects and ideas. The forums begin with each TAP representative briefly mentioning projects or issues s/he is working on, followed by a specific topic of discussion. Among the topics at the 2005 forums were trends in construction methods/costs; issues of affordability; standardization of income surveys and project development; updates from the Environmental Finance Center Network (EFCN), Environmental Financial Advisory Board (EFAB) and the Council of Infrastructure Financing Authorities (CIFA); asset management; USDA news, including underwriting and other credit issues; the Syracuse Center of Excellence as a resource for technical assistance providers; and comprehensive planning. The meetings also include open discussions about a range of issues, concerns, or projects with ample opportunity for people to network and share information.

Stakeholder Outreach and Education

The EFC has developed a distinctive niche with respect to generating public interest in environmental infrastructure projects. Public outreach and education activities are critical links for communities to generate public awareness and support and reduce project

costs. Over the past several years, the EFC has received calls from municipal leaders who worked to develop a much-needed project but feared that it might be rejected by voters due to a lack public understanding. It is not uncommon for the public to vote against a project due to misperceptions, particularly related to household cost issues.

The EFC has found that public education and outreach strategies have been successful in relaying an understanding about the impetus for the project, the process of project development, and the derivation of the household cost. The EFC approaches each community as a distinct entity for outreach and education services rather than applying a “one-size-fits-all” model. To begin, EFC staff meet with community leaders to learn the historical elements of a prospective project as well as the current conditions prompting the planning for the project. Information concerning the extent to which groups have formed in favor or opposition to the project is obtained as well as all information concerning estimated costs.

The EFC customizes the outreach strategy for each community. In some communities, the EFC develops a community-specific survey to gauge the level of public interest and identify public perceptions. Alternatively, or in tandem with the surveys, the EFC might conduct a series of focus groups to elicit input from homogenous factions within the population and to get insight into any concerns that might exist, what information (accurate or inaccurate) people have received, and what the general perceptions are. These tools enable the EFC to create a sensible strategy for the public outreach and education process. Depending on the community, the EFC might create



A focus group meeting

ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

materials for display and/or distribution in which information, such as the cost of wells/septic systems, is effectively depicted using graphic and verbal methods. Other material might include information concerning the costs associated with getting water from source to tap. EFC material is created to be specific to the community and consequently enjoys an element of responsiveness from community members that generic material cannot provoke.

Another outreach tool is the Community Roundtable. The EFC brings a light meal in the early evening and creates a panel of experts at the front of the room. The panels are typically comprised of at least one local government official, an engineer, and a representative from a government-sponsored funding agency. The facilitator leads the panel through a brief series of questions concerning the impetus for the project, the technical feasibility of the project, and the anticipated costs per household. The panel provides information on how financing takes place, the length of time it will take for the project to be built, and other issues the EFC believes appropriate. The audience is then engaged in a facilitated discussion in which they are provided the opportunity to express their concerns.

In 2005, the EFC's public outreach strategies were successful in involving the public and relaying, at the very least, an understanding of the reasoning behind the government's decision to consider or proceed with a particular project. For example, in the town of Windsor, New York, EFC staff developed and implemented a survey to build upon the public outreach efforts underway in the town. The EFC continued to assist the town of Windsor in the development of this potential project.

In the town of Inlet, New York, EFC staff helped facilitate a discussion about the development of a wastewater infrastructure project. The town is located in the Adirondack Mountains, and like most Adirondack municipalities, has a large seasonal community. Inlet officials have made at least two attempts to pursue a water project and one recent attempt to pursue a wastewater project—all of which failed. Inlet officials are concerned about drinking

water quality, but at this time are concentrating efforts on the development of a wastewater system. All properties adjacent to the Fifth Lake outlet in Inlet are nonconforming to New York Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) requirements. Cost and public distrust are perceived as the main impediments. The EFC conducted community surveys, focus groups, and roundtables to assist Inlet with the development of this potential wastewater project. Efforts are ongoing.

Training

The EFC has developed a unique role in providing customized training. As the PMFP was being developed, the EFC sought to ensure that its trainings complemented the training provided by its partners, including organizations such as the Rural Water Association, Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP), RCAP Solutions, the New York Conference of Mayors, and the Association of Towns. In order to impart the greatest benefit to communities without duplicating existing training available, the EFC has collaborated with its partners to create customized instructional formats, focused on smaller groups and individuals, which take place over a multi-day period and incorporate a multitude of subject areas. This approach allowed the EFC to “fill the gaps” that were believed to exist in the delivery of technical assistance and training among smaller communities. In 2005, the EFC invited more than 1,000 local government officials and technical assistance providers to its specialized training events. Furthermore, the EFC made itself available to provide content to the trainings held by its partner organizations as needed and appropriate.



July 2005 training participants

ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The EFC held four separate multiple-day training events in 2005 around New York State. The topic areas presented at the training events were determined primarily by responses from the EFC's TAPs and community representatives. The subjects addressed in the 2005 trainings included public finance, capital planning and budgeting, municipal bond issuance, computer finance models, rate-setting and analysis, asset management, environmental conflict management and resolution, project financing procedures and regulations, and strategic management.

Source Water Protection Project

Under the initial guidance of the University of New Mexico EFC and in cooperation with EPA Region 2, the EFC has been working with communities in Chenango County, New York, with common concerns for potential drinking water contamination. To achieve an outcome that combines both process facilitation and direct technical expertise, the EFC continued a collaborative relationship with the Water Resources Institute to carry out the activities of the project. The project was completed in June 2004, but the EFC has continued to work with the Chenango County Water Operators Council (a group of public and private water system operators and representatives from the County Health and Planning Departments, Soil and Water Conservation District, and the local Environmental Education Center). Through the council, the EFC secured a \$6,000 grant from the Altria Group, a private foundation, to work on a county project aimed at raising awareness of

drinking water sources and protection among private water system users. The following activities were completed on behalf of the Source Water Protection Project during 2005:

- Conducted focus groups and community meetings and developed outreach materials to promote source water protection practices among homeowners.
- Facilitated meetings of the Chenango County Water Operator's Council.
- Created a booklet on source water protection in cooperation with the Chenango County Health Department to be distributed to citizens and municipalities in the county.

The Source Water Protection Project took a watershed management approach and is based on the notion that communities working proactively to protect their health and resources will prevent contamination of their drinking water sources. A proactive approach can help a community avoid serious health risks associated with drinking water contamination. It can also be an economical approach—preventing contamination can be much less expensive than cleaning a contaminated source.

Rate-Setting Assistance

In 2005, the EFC continued to work with communities attempting to create equitable user rates as they pursued water and wastewater system improvements. The EFC learned through evaluations that training events often resulted in “information overload,” and municipal representatives derived greater benefit from more one-on-one methods of instruction. Providing individual assistance requires more time on the part of EFC staff; however, it results in the delivery of more comprehensive information to communities and ensures their ability to develop a stronger internal capacity to work with rate structures. In turn, this ensures that the government's investment in the EFC will have the longer-term impact it seeks.



Well testing

ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Panels on Wastewater for Local Representatives

First developed and implemented in 2004, the “Wastewater Panels” are the product of a collaborative approach involving the New York Water Environment Association (NYWEA), the New York Rural Water Association (NYRWA), DEC, and the EFC. While many think of the chief operator as the responsible party for a municipal wastewater system, the overall success or failure of the system largely depends upon the local officials and other non-technical staff. Informational sessions were specifically designed to reach out to local officials and other non-technical staff; the target audience was comprised of local representatives who contribute to the management of their wastewater facility, including mayors, supervisors, clerks, and sewer board members.

A key component of each session focused on funding sources for wastewater infrastructure improvements. Representatives from the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation, USDA/Rural Development, and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority talked about potential sources of funding for wastewater projects and provided a wealth of information for participants.

Several factors were instrumental to the success of this project including: free-of-charge evening sessions, an interactive agenda, and conveyance of technical information in layperson terms. Additionally, a comprehensive marketing approach, using printed and electronic media buttressed by personal contact, was implemented to reach the target audience throughout New York State. A pre-session questionnaire focused on participants’ needs and key issues, coupled with a facilitated roundtable discussion, allowed each session to be responsive and individualized. Participants were afforded the opportunity to network with both funding agency representatives and technical staff.

PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA OUTREACH

The EFC produced a number of printed outreach materials, including the following:

Articles

Wrote articles for NYWEA’s Clearwaters magazine (Fall 2005 issue), the New Jersey League of Municipalities, and for the DEC’s “Water Week.”

Asset Management Information Brochure

Created brochure for the Advanced Asset Management workshop discussed later in this report.

Newsletter

Produced two issues of the comprehensive EFC newsletter, *Connections*, and mailed it to 1,750 individuals.

Source Water Protection Brochure

In conjunction with the Chenango County Department of Health, and as supported by the Altria Foundation, the EFC produced a brochure to be disseminated to citizens and municipalities in Chenango County.

Ongoing Projects & Initiatives

The EFC’s guiding principles for ongoing projects and initiatives are as follows:

- Attend professional association meetings and presentations about the EFC Network on relevant issues such as capital planning and financing, water and wastewater rate-setting, collaborative planning, capacity building, asset management, and sustainable community development.
- Participate in planning prospective projects with government, nonprofit, and private sector partners of the PMFP, including projects that can receive support from funders.
- Collaborate with other technical assistance organizations to provide assistance to rural communities seeking to address environmental infrastructure improvement projects.
- Serve as a content provider to government and nonprofit organizations that provide assistance and conduct workshops for municipal decision-makers.

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- Continue to emphasize collaborating with other universities and nonprofit organizations to develop proposals addressing environmental concerns, particularly those relating to water issues, but also including Brownfield redevelopment, sustainable development, asset management, and waste management.
- Respond to requests from communities for assistance ranging from how to finance major water system repairs and how to develop capital budgets for environmental improvements to conducting focus groups to elicit public input or assess public awareness and support of environmental projects.

COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

Below is a representative listing of EFC activities that exhibit major collaborative efforts.

EFC Network

PMFP. The Public Management and Finance Program (PMFP) was the most significant collaborative activity during 2005. EFCs located in Kentucky, North Carolina, New Mexico, Idaho, California, Maine and Maryland were included in a proposal submitted to the USDA in December 2004 to fund the water and wastewater work of the PMFP.

Source Water Project. With the initial guidance of the New Mexico EFC and in collaboration with four other EFCs, the Region 2 EFC continued to collaborate on a Source Water Project. The EPA funding for the project officially ended in June 2004; however, the Region 2 EFC sustained the project through support from a private foundation. Finalization of activities occurred in 2005.

Other

Center of Excellence. The EFC increased its programmatic collaboration with the Syracuse Center of Excellence in Environmental and Energy Systems (CoE), a major initiative of the federal and New York State governments. The CoE is a federation of 72 academic, government, and private sector partners. The EFC assisted the CoE with planning and carrying out a major symposium and reviewed and edited the

production of the CoE's annual progress report. The CoE helped sponsor an EPA Advanced Asset Management workshop hosted by the EFC.

Community Assistance. The New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation (NYSEFC), RCAP Solutions, Inc. and EFC staff collaborated on two occasions in 2005 to provide comprehensive assistance to communities (the towns of Inlet and Windsor) in need of drinking water and wastewater systems. RCAP and NYSEFC provided assistance in developing the applications for grants and loans while the EFC focused on methods to generate community support and customize public education efforts concerning the costs of systems and issues surrounding the impetus for the projects.

Grant Collaboration. The EFC collaborated on an EPA grant proposal with New York Water Environmental Association (NYWEA), the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and the Maryland Center for Environmental Training (MCET), in addition to numerous other nonprofit and state agencies within the Susquehanna River Basin.

Intermunicipal Cooperation. The EFC facilitated discussions with the town of Hanover and the villages of Silver Creek and Forestville regarding inter-municipal cooperation and shared services. The EFC brought the New York State Office of State Comptroller to the table to assist with this project.

Wastewater Panels. The EFC continued implementation of a unique series of training events, the "Panels on Wastewater for Local Representatives," which were developed in collaboration with the DEC, the New York Rural Water Association, and NYWEA. The EFC built on this project throughout 2005 with additional funding from the DEC. The Region 2 EFC advised the state of Rhode Island about the Wastewater Panels and offered to help establish a similar program in that state.

ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Media. The EFC produced and will continue to update several electronic media communications, including:

Listserv. *PMFPTalk* is a listserv providing local government leaders and technical assistance providers a means to submit questions or disseminate information. Currently, there are 346 active members. *PMFPTalk* is primarily promoted and utilized as a tool for community members to obtain answers to questions they have about issues of water rates, water systems, wastewater treatment, finance programs, and technology. TAPs that have expertise in a range of issues prepare responses. Members can also search the archives of the listserv to get answers to questions that might have been addressed in the past. Additionally, *PMFPTalk* is a venue for posting information about upcoming EFC events such as conferences and training sessions. It also disseminates information about events, funding opportunities, and other important notices on a routine basis.

Web Site. The EFC updated its EFC Web site (www.maxwell.syr.edu/efc) to include community-specific Web pages, relevant technical assistance links, and more. The Web site will continue to undergo additional changes.

PRESENTATIONS, CONFERENCES, AND MEETINGS

Presentations

The following list shows the conference or event EFC attended, followed by the topic of the presentation.

- New York Association of Towns conference: EFC and PMFP services for rural New York communities including rate analyses, technical assistance coordination, public outreach methods, and meeting facilitation.
- NYWEA spring conference: EFC services and Wastewater Panels—highlighting results of sessions, plans for future sessions, and integration of asset management principles and training.
- New York Council of Mayors spring conference: EFC services, projects, and program highlights.
- Cornell University Local Government Program: Working with consultants to develop successful infrastructure projects.
- Meetings of the Syracuse University Maxwell School alumni from Central New York—mostly public officials: Capabilities of the EFC.
- Hurricane Katrina “teach-in” (Syracuse University): Advice on sustainable redevelopment.
- FOCUS Greater Syracuse (sustainable communities non-profit group) presentation on the progress toward cleaning up central New York water and waterways: EFC services.
- Adirondack Ecology Center networking meeting (intent was to collaborate over sustainability projects and better leverage resources for the Adirondack region): EFC services.
- Large Chinese delegation at Syracuse University: EFC services and NYS local government perspective.
- NYDEC headquarters in Albany: NYDEC-led program for the Chinese delegation.
- Onondaga County Cornell Cooperative Extension annual meeting: Presentation on Syracuse Center of Excellence (CoE).
- Invitation-only meeting in Syracuse with U.S. Green Building Council President Rick Fedrizzi: EFC capabilities.
- Oswego County School Boards Association: Interest-based negotiation.
- Meeting with New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner, New Jersey Highlands Commission, New Jersey



ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Environmental Financing Program, New Jersey State League of Municipalities, and mayor of Peapack and Gladstone: overview of EFCN and Region 2 EFC capacities.

- Sustainability networking meeting (“Leveraging Central New York’s Resources to Increase the Movement Toward Sustainability”) co-hosted and presented at this collaboration between Syracuse University and the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry.
- *Syracuse Post Standard* editorial board meeting: EFC and CoE activities and sustainable communities principles.

Conferences—Hosted

- Four PMFP Technical Assistance Partnership Forums (TAPF) at Syracuse University for local government officials and technical assistance providers.
- A PMFP/EFC three-day conference at Beaver Hollow Conference Center for local government representatives and technical assistance providers. Training was provided in rate-setting, public outreach strategies, innovative financing, drinking water security, asset management, wastewater treatment operations, and project development.
- Four training events, “Panel on Wastewater for Local Representatives” (advanced and basic), in collaboration with the DEC, New York Rural Water Association, and NYWEA (two in Findley Lake and one each in Lake Placid and Albany).
- Highly successful two-day EPA Advanced Asset Management Workshop in Syracuse.
- PMFP two-day workshop in Findley Lake for local government representative and TAPs. Training was provided in strategic management, innovative financing, working with consultants to gain successful project completion, asset management, and computer-based capital planning.

- Three-day Syracuse CoE conference in Syracuse on indoor air quality (co-hosted and helped plan).

Conferences—Attended

- EPA Advanced Asset Management seminar in Pennsylvania to improve the range of services offered by the EFC/PMFP.
- Two EFAB and EFCN meetings (Washington and San Francisco).
- Invitation-only Asset Management Working Session in Washington, D.C.
- Maryland Center for Environmental Training, Asset Management “Train the Trainer” national conference in San Antonio. Staff received certification.
- Invitation-only “Presidential Forum on Ethics and Entrepreneurship” held at Lemoyne College in Syracuse.
- Council of Infrastructure Financial Authorities (CIFA) conference in Chicago.
- Annual conference of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities in Atlantic City.
- U.S. Green Build Council annual convention in Atlanta (represented EFC and hosted major CoE exhibit).
- Sustainable Tompkins County symposium in Ithaca, New York.
- Invitation-only annual meeting of the University Hill Corporation (Syracuse).
- Invitation-only U.S. Green Build Council innovative financing summit (McGraw Hill, New York City).
- Underground Infrastructure Management conference (Washington).

ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Meetings—Process Facilitations

- Seven meetings in the town of Windsor to discuss the results of the resident survey and the final engineering report, and to facilitate the public outreach process.
- Four meetings with town of Inlet representatives and citizens regarding a comprehensive community survey pertaining to the potential infrastructure project in the town.
- Eight town meetings in Chenango County regarding the Altria and Source Water Project, including two Water Operators Council meetings.
- Two meetings with town of Fenton officials to gather data on potential wastewater project.
- Ten meetings with Oswego County officials regarding the facilitation of public input into the process of potentially privatizing the existing public solid waste management system.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture panels reviewing Maxwell School capstone projects on alternative water rates and affordability.
- Five meetings of FOCUS Greater Syracuse (feedback on presentations on the Syracuse Center of Excellence, Sustainable Cities, Sustainable Waste Management, Sustainable Development, Indoor Air Quality and Community Development).
- Two meetings with the town of Hanover, one meeting with the village of Silver Springs, and one meeting with the village of Forestville, regarding inter-municipal cooperation and the potential of shared services.
- Six meetings of the spring 2006 conference planning meeting of FOCUS Greater Syracuse (representing both the Syracuse CoE and the EFC). The topic was building a sustainable community.

- Met with the village of Silver Creek to present a water rate analysis.
- Met with the town of Cortandville Citizens for Aquifer Protection and the Economy (CAPE) regarding a local dispute over aquifer protection and economic development.

Meetings—Development of New Collaborations

- Three meetings with city of Syracuse Economic Development representatives regarding EFC's assistance with Brownfield development projects.
- Meeting with a liaison to the Onondaga Indian Nation regarding the potential of EFC collaboration over land-claim issues.
- Meeting with Syracuse University's Global Affairs Institute regarding the EFC participating in a study focusing on the effectiveness of environmental non-governmental organizations.
- Meetings with three local technical assistance providers and NYWEA regarding co-sponsorship of future Asset Management Workshop.
- Meetings with the Syracuse Center of Excellence in Environmental and Energy Systems (CoE), the Campbell Public Affairs Institute (CPAI) and the Center of Environmental Policy and Administration (CEPA), all at Syracuse University, regarding collaborative programming.
- Two meetings with representatives of EPA and GHD (a company that provides asset management training) regarding the development of a university based academic and professional training program on Asset Management.
- Three meetings with representative of the Syracuse Program on the Analysis and Resolution of Conflicts regarding collaborative planning for an Environmental Dispute Resolution program.

ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Meeting with Syracuse University representative regarding the EFC's assistance with Syracuse led post-Katrina sustainable rebuilding efforts, particularly at Tulane, Loyola, and New Orleans Universities.
- Seven meetings with the EnSPIRE program (Office of Environment and Society) at Syracuse University/SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry with the intent to collaborate over creation of joint sustainable development programs.
- Three meetings with a Central New York American Institute of Architects (AIA) Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) grant program exploratory task force.
- Meeting with representatives from New York State Energy Research and Development Authority's (NYSERDA) ENERGY STAR® program to discuss collaborations.
- Meetings with various upstate New York organizations to build new collaborative relationships (e.g., DestiNY USA, Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, National Grid Corp., Manufacturers Association of CNY, Time-Warner, Metropolitan Development Association, Upstate Medical University, CNY Small Business Technology Development Office, and the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry).

New Projects & Initiatives

The central purpose of the EFC continues to be to enhance the administrative and financial capacities of state and local government officials and the nonprofit and private sectors to respond efficiently and effectively to a demanding set of federal and state environmental regulations, mandates and challenges. Building upon the success of prior program years, the continuing work of the EFC is now based on achieving the following six discrete functional goals:

Goal 1: Increase the administrative and long-term planning capacity of local government officials.

Goal 2: Maintain and foster project-based partnerships with various agencies.

Goal 3: Collaborate and build relationships with faculty and professional staff from various institutions.

Goal 4: Collaborate with other service providers to further develop the public management and finance program to meet the needs of primarily rural communities.

Goal 5: Expand service throughout EPA Region 2.

Goal 6: Develop and implement new, creative, and entrepreneurial approaches to achieve sustainable environmental results.

The following new initiatives began in 2005:

SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM

In 2005, the EFC started developing a program on sustainability. The intent is to offer process facilitation, public outreach, engagement, training, education programs, and direct and indirect technical assistance. These activities entail more intensive collaboration with Maxwell School faculty and other institutions and organizations, such as:

- Syracuse Center of Excellence in Environmental and Energy Systems
- Maxwell School's Center for Environmental Policy and Administration
- Syracuse EnSPIRE Program (Office on Environment and Society)
- Other Syracuse University Departments and Schools
- SUNY, College of Environmental Science and Forestry
- Environmental Finance Center (EFC) Network

ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- U.S. Green Building Council
- GreeningUSA
- National Grass Roots Recycling Network
- National Recycling Coalition
- New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse, and Recycling
- Local economic development agencies
- Local nonprofit organizations

The following target areas represent the EFC's foci. These also serve as indicators of sustainable development (as modified from EPA's National Center for Environmental Innovation's *Environmental Innovation Portfolio*, March 2005):

Promote *strategic direction and priorities* through:

- Strategic management and planning (e.g., training and consultations).
- Innovative and sustainable financing information transfer (e.g., "affordability," enterprise accounting, public/private partnerships).
- Infrastructure asset management (e.g., training, consultations and academic programming for water, wastewater, solid waste, fleet operations)

Support *superior environmental performance* through:

- Leadership development programs.
- Conflict management and interest-based negotiation programs and interventions.

Facilitate *environmental sustainability* with a focus on:

- Climate change and renewable energy (e.g., "local" options such as biofuel).

- Energy and environmental systems in buildings (in cooperation with the Syracuse CoE).
- Resource use and waste management (waste reduction, reuse and recycling, resource recovery parks, extended producer responsibility, and other sustainable consumption and waste management approaches).
- "Design for the Environment" (e.g., "green" buildings and environmental management systems).

Promote *collaborative partnerships for environmental protection* through:

- Community-based environmental partnerships.
- Government-industry partnerships.
- Intergovernmental partnerships (e.g., facilitation of intermunicipal cooperation, network governance, and governmental consolidation).

Encourage *sustainable economic development* through:

- Targeted geographic solutions (e.g., Brownfield development, watershed quality).
- Establishment of a pragmatic balance between economic development and preservation (including assistance with job creation at the local level).

Specific new initiatives include:

Adirondack Ecological Center

Exploring potential project collaborations in the sustainable development area for the Adirondack Mountain region of New York State.

American Institute of Architects Sustainable Design Assessment

Working with an interdisciplinary group in central New York to design a unique program to evaluate sustainable indicators in the area.

ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Department of Energy Industrial Assessment Program

Collaborating on the next grant application; this program is housed at Syracuse University.

Environmental NGO Evaluation

Working with Syracuse' Global Affairs Institute regarding the EFC's potential involvement with a National Science Foundation project to evaluate environmental organizations.

FOCUS Greater Syracuse

Working with this sustainable communities grassroots nonprofit organization to build a sustainable central New York. This includes hosting a major spring exhibition, as well as promoting 82 goals related to environmental stewardship, social equity, and economic development.

Hurricane Katrina Aftermath

Offering technical assistance to the Red Cross, EPA Region 4, EFCs in Regions 4 and 6, Habitat for Humanity, and Syracuse University to help in efforts to rebuild New Orleans area universities.

Institute for Sustainable Communications

Working with the founder of this organization, who is also a faculty member at the City University of New York, on the establishment of a collaborative program on sustainability that would target the printing and graphics industry.

Major Collaboration on Sustainability Programming

Working with other key organizations at Syracuse University to build a cohesive and synergistic program on sustainability.

Oswego County Environmental Management Council

Assisting with program structure.

Program on the Analysis and Resolution of Conflicts (PARC)

Working with PARC to design an environmental dispute program; this renowned program is housed at the Maxwell School.

Puerto Rico

Researching environmental problems and opportunities for collaboration.

Steel Recycling Institute (SRI)

Exploring the opportunity to participate with a Department of Energy/SRI program related to "cool metal roofing."

Various Municipalities

Developing potential assistance programs in areas such as water, wastewater, and inter-municipal cooperation.

SYRACUSE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENERGY SYSTEMS (CoE) PARTNERSHIP



Created in 2002 by New York Governor George E. Pataki, the Syracuse CoE is a federation of 72 partners, including industrial firms, businesses, research organizations, local government economic development agencies, the state and federal government, and a number of academic institutions. Its intention is to create innovations to improve health, productivity, security, and sustainability in various environments. Syracuse University sponsors the CoE, but other academic partners include the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Alfred University, Clarkson University, Cornell University, the Institute of Ecosystem Studies, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, SUNY Upstate Medical University, SUNY at Albany, SUNY at Buffalo, the University of Rochester, and the Upstate Freshwater Institute.

ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Activities within the Syracuse CoE include research, product development, and educational programs. The scope of the CoE has expanded beyond the initial focus on “built and urban environments.” For instance, challenges facing rural areas and local governments are being incorporated into the activities of the CoE. Another expansion of the original core mission of the CoE is into the area of renewable and clean energy sources, from wind and solar power to geothermal and fuel cells. In addition, the CoE has been charged with making the biofuels industry in New York one of the strongest in the nation. A key vision of the CoE is to promote more sustainable economic development by reducing energy consumption, decreasing air and water pollution, and improving environmental quality.

The EFC enjoys a collaborative relationship with the CoE. The objective of the collaboration is to utilize the EFC’s and PMFP’s strengths—including public outreach, process facilitation, focus on local government needs, and assistance to rural communities—to augment the CoE’s mission. In addition, this relationship will assist the EFC with its intent to more aggressively promote sustainable development.

In total, nearly \$190 million in private and public funds have been invested in the CoE. This includes a New York State commitment of \$44 million from Governor Pataki and more than \$96 million in private and foundation investments. It also includes more than \$30 million in federal resources secured by Congressman James Walsh. Collaboration between the EFC and the CoE will further maximize the impact of the existing funds for each organization.

Specific new initiatives include:

Annual Symposiums

Assisting the CoE with design and implementation of annual symposiums. The first was in October 2005 and focused on indoor air quality.

Campus Sustainability

Increasingly involved in supporting Syracuse University, which has made a major commitment to sustainability, including pursuing U.S. Green Building Council LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification for all new major construction projects (only one of two universities to make this commitment).

Green Buildings

Assisting the CoE in its green building endeavors and expecting to play a major role in the future. The CoE is taking the lead on promoting green buildings and is a major affiliate of the U.S. Green Building Council. A major exhibit at the U.S. Green Building Council annual convention in Atlanta served as the kick-off event.

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE PROGRAM (PMFP)

Specific new initiatives include:

Asset Management

Promoting asset management. This important initiative began with staff receiving extensive training in this field and culminated in a highly successful workshop hosted by the EFC in Syracuse on advanced asset management (led by EPA). The Syracuse EFC is now working on new initiatives in this area, such as the development of a major university-based academic program on infrastructure and asset management with the Syracuse Center of Excellence, L. C. Smith College of Engineering at Syracuse and the Maxwell School. One targeted audience for this new academic based program will be local officials. In addition, the EFC is exploring partnerships with other institutions, such as the City University of New York. The EFC is also preparing a proposal to the USDA to continue its training for local officials in the field of asset management and to complete consultations in this field with local municipalities.

ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Expansion into New Jersey

Developing activities in New Jersey. This initiative started with the EFC's proposal for doing work with the New Jersey Pinelands Commission on a waste management district project. In addition, the EFC has been corresponding with Vince Girardy, mayor of Peapack and Gladstone, who is helping the EFC establish contacts in the region. This effort has already resulted in meetings with the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Financing Program. The EFC will build on these efforts and continue to identify potential partners and projects in New Jersey.

International Programs

Helping facilitate the Maxwell School's international programs in terms of integrating environmental management and finance and infrastructure development components. The EFC participated in a large RFP to which Maxwell responded for an Infrastructure Management Program with India's Institute for Public Administration. In addition, the EFC presented to a large contingent of Chinese municipal officials and facilitated a meeting by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation with that group. The EFC is currently designing a program on solid waste management for a group of Vietnamese officials.

Contact

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Lake Ontario Efforts

Explored potential opportunities with the International Lake Ontario—St. Lawrence River Study and the Lake Ontario Coastal Initiative and continuing to review opportunities for collaboration.

Solid Waste Management

Working with the county of Oswego to help facilitate public input into a year-long process of evaluating alternative management models for its integrated solid waste management system. This initiative could include moving toward a public-private partnership, full privatization, enterprise accounting or some other management and/or financing model.



Outcomes

As a result of the activities and accomplishments outlined in the previous section, outcomes have included the following:

PRESENTED AND DISSEMINATED INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY TO WIDE AUDIENCES

Not only has the EFC continued to give presentations and trainings to large and varied audiences, but the EFC has improved its training abilities over time. Over the past decade, the EFC recognized that rate-setting training delivered in the classroom to groups of practitioners does not have long-term value, particularly in regard to changes in political administrations leading to changes in rate-setting decisions. In addition, the nature of classroom training does not always account for differences in learning styles, and human nature inhibits many individuals in a group setting from asking specific questions related to their circumstances. By working with communities on an individual basis instead, the EFC is not only facilitating



A TAP presentation

capacity-building within a community, it is complementing the broader training provided by other TAPs, such as the Rural Water Association, which continues to deliver training using classroom methods.

In addition, post-event evaluations from EFC training programs support that training designed around existing municipal situations provides more effective learn-

ing. The EFC elicited specific information from participating communities in advance of events to integrate “real world” situations during training. In addition, participants were afforded significant opportunity to pose situation-specific questions to the trainers, which resulted in extensive follow up after the training. Community representatives and technical assistance providers alike highly rate the PMFP training on a consistent basis in terms of both format and content. The training events have continued to expand the clientele of the EFC, as many community leaders have requested specific assistance or asked to be put in contact with partners’ technical assistance services. The trainings are a significant accomplishment, “bridging the gaps” in terms of having a means for TAPs and local governments to interact in a comprehensive manner, using a variety of methods to promote learning, networking, and the delivery of solid expertise relative to environmental improvements. The PMFP will continue to use highly interactive and participatory methods of delivering all of its components.

ENHANCED PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF CRITICAL COMMUNITY ISSUES

The PMFP’s public outreach process has developed a reputation for enhancing the public’s understanding of water and wastewater projects, essential in New York communities where voter approval is necessary for debt to be acquired. Roundtables have always resulted in positive and highly constructive discourse focused on each project. Public officials frequently glean insight they previously did not have, and the public always gets accurate information framed in terms they can understand. These successes are exemplified by the numerous requests the Syracuse EFC has received from other communities to provide facilitation.

EXPANDED REACH OF PROGRAM

While the EFC’s PMFP program has historically focused on New York State, because of its success and replicability, EFCs located in Kentucky, Maine, North Carolina, California, and New Mexico collabo-

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

rated in late 2004 and submitted proposals to build upon the PMFP concept in their respective states. In addition, the Syracuse EFC began to promote the PMFP in New Jersey in 2005.

In addition, the EFC was asked to present information about the PMFP program to a large contingent of Chinese municipal officials, and is currently designing a program on solid waste management for a group of Vietnamese officials.

Finally, the Syracuse EFC continues to receive calls and other solicitations to perform its services throughout New York, the base of operations. For example, municipal leaders who fear voter rejection for municipal projects continue to call the EFC requesting outreach and education efforts.



Impacts

In 2005, the Syracuse EFC continued its mission to enhance the administrative and financial capacities of state and local government agencies as well as non-profit organizations and private entities as they endeavor to improve environmental quality and maintain environmental infrastructure. Specific environmental issues addressed through the EFC's activities and accomplishments include:

- Drinking water protection and security
- Wastewater infrastructure
- Aquifer protection
- Sustainable redevelopment/sustainable communities
- Climate change and renewable energy
- Resource conservation
- Waste management
- Green buildings
- Indoor air quality